

## Seeking God #2

Isa. 45:19 – “... I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain ...”

This means that when God commands us to seek him, our seeking will not be in vain. He wants us to seek him because he wants us to find and know him. It is a command, mixed with a promise (seek – and you shall find).

Last week I discounted the idea of it meaning that God would not say it (“Seek ye the Lord”) in vain, because God never says anything in vain – He means what he says and does not use empty words or chatter like we tend to do. However, in Ezek. 6:10 it says something similar, so perhaps I was too quick to reject that meaning. There it says “And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.” So taking this into account in Isa. 49:15, the meaning would also be that when God commands us to seek him, it is not a suggestion or a request, but a command that he expects to be obeyed, “or else”.

### Why should we seek God?

- So we can truly live. Amos 5:4 – “For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live.”

- Spiritual, eternal life

Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly – Jn. 10:10

Woman at well – Jn. 4:10-14 – “... If thou knewest ...thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. ... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

- Physical life, to be kept from God’s judgments.

Ezek. 33:10-11 – “... Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Zeph. 2:3 – “Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”

The Egyptian plagues did not fall on the Israelites in the land of Goshen. Ex. 8:22-23

Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian – Jer. 39:15-18. Even though the city was going to fall because God had given it over to the Babylonians (approx. 586 BC), he was promised personal deliverance, not to fall by the sword, “because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord”. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, because God’s people have often suffered persecution and even martyrdom for the faith, but still we have an example that should encourage us during times of God’s judgment on the wickedness around us. Persecution for Jesus’ name is one thing, but the punishment of the wicked is another, and we should seek God and trust him to be kept from the great judgments soon to fall on the earth.

Ezek. 9:4-6 – An angel went through the city and set a mark on the foreheads of the men that were truly grieved at the wickedness around them. Then other angels went through the city to slay, “but come not near any man upon whom is the mark”.

Lk. 21:34-36 – there is a snare coming on all the earth (the Day of the Lord), and we need to be watchful, and not be taken up with partying and the cares of this life.”Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

- For our daily needs and provision. Mt. 6:25-34 – “... Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.”

God already knows our needs, and will provide for us. Worrying and anxiety isn't going to change anything. Our responsibility is to work faithfully in our vocational calling, and trust God to provide for us. Sometimes he does it through our jobs, sometimes by gifts, sometimes by unusual circumstances, or “divine discounts”. He can even use our enemies to supply our needs if he so chooses. Prov. 13:22 - “The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.”

- To be delivered from fear. Ps. 34:4 – “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

God commands us not to fear, and yet fear is natural in many circumstances. Why would God tell us not to fear? Because he says he will be with us. If we are seeking God and come to really know him, we will increasingly trust him, and as a result of that, fear will no longer control us.

Isa. 41:10 – “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed ; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” How can we have confidence that God is “with us” to strengthen, help, and uphold, if we are not seeking him?

- For general success and prosperity. 2 Chr. 26:5 – “And he (Uzziah) sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.”

Dt. 28:1-14 – God promised Israel incredible blessing in everything they did, if they would obey him, and (in the whole rest of the chapter) incredible curses if they would not obey. We know that this was a part of the law, and we are not under the law, but under grace. Nevertheless, we can conclude generally, that if we will seek God with all our hearts and obey him, he will bring many blessings upon us, and that if we do not, nothing will really go right in our lives for very long.

Will this always be the case? No, several places in the Bible record the puzzlement of the saints with the issues, “Why do the wicked prosper?”, and “Why do bad things happen to good people?”. There are reasons, but in the end, our place is to trust and obey, and leave the results to God. Job 13:15 – “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”.

God is not “afar off” – he is near and can hear us - Ac. 17:27 (24-) – God has made all nations of men of one blood, and said “That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” So in life’s puzzlements, in times of blessing and abundance, or in times of great trials and discouragements, or even apparent defeats, seek God. If he seems far away, remember that that is true – he seems far away. In truth though, he is immediately present and can always hear the cry of his people. He probably will not speak to you audibly, but if you seek and listen, if you trust and obey, eventually you will recognize his working and direction in your life.